

# Highly Effective Human Service Leaders

## Purpose of this Newsletter

This quarterly newsletter is specifically for frontline workers and supervisors in child welfare, child protection, juvenile justice, and other related fields to support exceptional leadership.

## CONTACT US

We would love your thoughts on topics we can cover in future issues.

Email Tim at

[Tim@HumanServicesLeadership.org](mailto:Tim@HumanServicesLeadership.org) or visit [www.HumanServicesLeadership.org](http://www.HumanServicesLeadership.org)

The Human Services Leadership Institute has worked with over 10,000 management staff to support exceptional leadership performance and staff retention.

See information about *The Essential Handbook for Highly Effective Human Service Managers* and trainings on the last page.



## This Issue

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## Retention Starts with You

Many of the 10,000 supervisors I have worked with report challenges with workers. These challenges can range from inconsistent levels of performance to a lack of professional skills needed to excel.

However, one important piece which is often missing in the discussion is the role of the supervisor. Supervisors play a vital role in not only hiring workers, but supporting and training them to fit in with the department/agency as well as meet and exceed client needs.

When supervisors experience an employee who struggles with expected performance, they should first assess their role in the outcome. Key questions to consider:

1. How available have I been throughout the process?
2. How have I ensured they fully understood the tasks they are expected to complete?
3. Have I given them the tools they needed to be successful?

Other questions to consider:

1. Have I assumed they have the needed skills due to their education or prior work experience and not verified?
2. Have I paired them with the right person to mentor/help orient them?
3. Have I asked them what they needed and adapted my approach based on their feedback?

Sometimes the root cause of employee performance issues can be small things. Examples can include: not checking in enough, not asking the employee to demonstrate their knowledge of the tasks they are to perform, not asking what they need, etc.

A common theme reported in recent trainings has been the lack of professional skills of employees. This could be difficulty collaborating with peers, following through in a timely manner, problem-solving, and using critical thinking. Do not assume staff has the skills to excel, take time to thoroughly train them.

## Research Update

Radley, Schelbe, and Spinelli (2018) analyzed different levels of support which could influence the positive experiences of new child welfare workers:

1. Instrumental Support: support provided by agencies to complete job tasks.
2. Expressive Support: support to process thoughts and feelings related to work.
3. Available Support: support provided through available supervision and availability of leadership to troubleshoot difficult cases.

### The critical areas highlighted in the study:

1. Missed supervision meetings often made it especially challenging for new workers to learn and complete their jobs effectively.
2. Some colleagues were not readily accessible. One respondent reported they were not ready for the lack of support and guidance.

## For Frontline Workers: Taking Initiative and Being Proactive

Management are often looking for employees who take initiative and are proactive. These are skills which help one to immediately stand out.

Taking initiative and consistently being proactive involve:

1. Anticipating potential client challenges before they occur and identifying resources in case they are needed.
2. Anticipating needs of the department and making efforts to strengthen and support it.

For example, a supervisor at a training reported workers were in need of a training in a specific approach and the agency lacked money to pay for training. The supervisor was pleasantly surprised to find out one of his workers not only identified a professional who could provide the training in the community, but also arranged for them to train workers in the department for no cost.

Another area where one can take initiative is with their professional development.

### Professional Development

It is not uncommon for employees to aim for promotional opportunities, but some are unsure of the path to take.

The first step typically involves taking ownership of your professional development. This

means one needs to actively look for opportunities to expand their skillsets and not rely on others.

Taking Initiative with Your Professional Development Includes:

1. Request to attend as many trainings as possible.
2. After attending training, show how you are putting information to use. Develop a professional development plan surrounding main points of the training you found interesting and show how you intend to implement relevant areas over the next 3-6 months.
3. Participate in organizational committees. It may be a wellness committee or a retention committee. If one is lacking, take initiative to recruit individuals, with permission, and set one up.
4. Approach colleagues who have skills you do not possess. Connections with others is a vital part of being a highly effective professional.
  - a. Not everyone will be open to sharing knowledge, but do not let this deter you.
  - b. Once you find a colleague who is receptive to helping:
    - i. Ask to shadow them.
    - ii. Try to meet at least monthly to learn about their approach.

## Upcoming Events You Can Attend

### Creating the Optimal Environment to Lead

8/26/19: Ingham County DHHS, Michigan  
8/27 and 8/28: Available for private training  
8/29/19: St. Clair County DHHS, Michigan  
8/30/19: Wayne County DHHS, Michigan

### Maximizing Employee Engagement and Retention

9/17/19: Spotsylvania, VA  
9/18/19: Bedford, VA  
9/19/19: Chesterfield, VA  
9/30/19: Upland, CA  
10/1/19: La Verne, CA  
10/2/19: El Monte, CA  
10/16/19: Dallas, TX  
11/5/19: Cincinnati, OH  
11/19/19: Philadelphia, PA

See more information and registration details at:

<https://humanservicesleadership.org/services/upcoming-trainings/>

\*Contact Tim to host a training. Hosting agencies receive many benefits, including free training admissions, free books, discounts on books and trainings, etc.

See book reviews and ordering information at

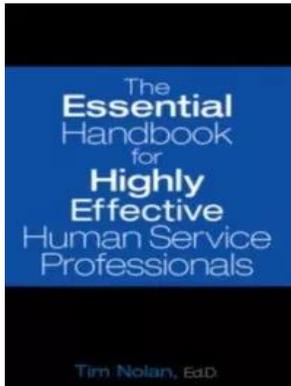
[www.HumanServicesLeadership.org/books](http://www.HumanServicesLeadership.org/books)

### About the Human Services Leadership Institute

The Human Services Leadership Institute is led by Tim Nolan, Ed.D., who has worked with over 10,000 human service managers and dozens of organizations across 21 states. He focuses on developing leadership skills for management to support exceptional employee commitment, performance, and retention.

Tim is available to provide a wide variety of training to your staff and also specializes in organizational assessment and performance improvement.

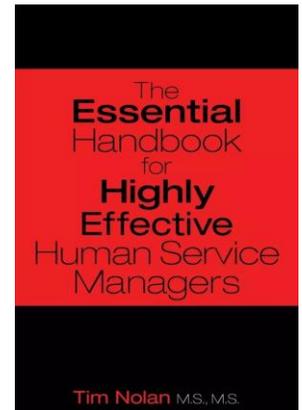
See more information at [www.HumanServicesLeadership.org](http://www.HumanServicesLeadership.org)



Written specifically for frontline workers to provide exceptional client care, customer service, leadership, and professional performance. Chapters are short and concise.



Written in the same manner as the human services manager book, but geared for management in any field (i.e. business).



Used by thousands of management staff across the country. Short and concise chapters are easy to read and packed with skills and strategies which can immediately help elevate your leadership performance and employee commitment, performance, and retention.

This book is also a centerpiece of the **Highly Effective Human Service Managers Program**, a 12-month program 19 organizations are using to improve leadership skills for managers and staff retention.